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ORIGIN ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OES-07 PM-04 EB-07 COME-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

INFO PANAMA CANAL CO WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PN, HQ, EWWT

SUBJECT:TRANSPORTATION OF HERBICIDE ORANGE THROUGH HANAMA
CANAL

1. AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE CANAL ZONE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE,
AT YOUR OPTION YOU MAY WISH TO INFORM THE GOVERNMENT OF
PANAMA OR TO HOLD ON AN IF-ASKED BASIS THAT A SHIPLOAD OF
HERBICIDE ORANGE IS SCHEDULED TO TRANSIT THE PANAMA CANAL
EN ROUTE TO JOHNSTON ISLAND ON OR ABOUT JUNE 20. THE DE-
PARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE, THE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
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DISPOSAL OF HERBICIDE ORANGE, RECOMMENDS THAT THE INFOR-
MATION BE HELD FOR QUERY. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS FOR
YOUR BACKGROUND AND MAY BE DRAWN UPON AS NEEDED.

2. TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

JUNE 12: SHIP DEPARTS GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI

JUNE 18: SHIP ARRIVES AT PANAMA CANAL

JUNE 19: SHIP IS INSPECTED IN LIMON BAY

JUNE 20: SHIP TRANSITS CANAL

SEPT. 17: AFTER FINAL BURN AT JOHNSTON ISLAND, SHIP IS
CLEANED

OCT. 9: SHIP ARRIVES AT BALBOA

OCT. 10: SHIP TRANSITS CANAL

3. SHIP: M/V VULCANUS, DUTCH-OWNED, SIN6APOREAN FLAG,
DOUBLE-HULLED.

4. CARGO: 4200 METRIC TONS (80U,000 GALLONS) OF
HERBICIDE ORANGE. COMPONENTS: NORMAL BUTYL ESTER OF
2,4-DICHLOROPHENOXYACETIC ACID (2,4-D, ABOUT 50 PERCENT
BY VOLUME), NORMAL BUTYL ESTER OF
2,4,5-TRICHLOROPHENOXYACETIC ACID (2,4,5-T, ABOUT 50
PERCENT BY FOLUME), AND MINUTE QUANTITIES (ABOUT 2 PARTS
PER MILLION) OF 2,3,7,8-TETRACHLORO-DIBENZO-P-DIOXIN
(TCDD). THE FIRST TWO COMPOUNDS ARE COMMON COMMERCIAL
HERBICIDES. DIOXIN (TCDD) IS A TOXIC CONTAMINANT.
HERBICIDE ORANGE WAS USED AS A DEFOLIANT IN SOUTHEAST
ASIA DURING THE VIETNAM WAR.

5. DESTRUCTION PLAN: THE VULCANUS WILL PROCEED TO
JOHNSTON ISLAND TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH TEXT INCINERATION
AS APPROVED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY. BURN-
ING SHOULD DESTROY AT LEAST 99.7 PERCENT OF THE DEFOLIANT.

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6. PRECAUTIONS:

A. THE TRANSIT WILL BE VERY CAREFULLY MONITORED.

B. THERE HAVE BEEN CLOSE CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE USG
AGENCIES INVOLVED AND THE CANAL COMPANY ON ALL FACETS OF
THE TRANSIT. DETAILED SPILL PREVENTION AND CONTINGENCY
CONTROL PLANS AND PERSONNEL ARE AVAILABLE IF NEEDED.

C. THE VULCANUS IS A DOUBLE-HULLED SHIP.

D. THE SHIP WILL BE HELD IN LIMON BAY ?OR 24 HOURS BE-
FORE TRANSITING. AT THIS TIME THE BALLEST PUMPS WILL BE
LOCKED AND SEALED AND REMAIN LOCKED FOR THE ENTIRE TRANSIT.

E. THE CONTENTS OF THE SHIP WILL BE MEASURED THREE TIMES:
AT THE BEGINNING O? THE 24-HOUR HOLDING PERIOD, AT THE
END OF THE 24-HOUR HOLDING PERIOD JUST BEFORE THE TRANSIT,
AND AFTER THE TRANSIT TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS NO LOSS.

F. THE WATER AROUND THE SHIP WILL BE TESTED AT THE BEGINNING AND THE END OF THE 24-HOUR HOLDING PERIOD.

G. IN ORDER TO VERIFY THAT THERE ARE NO ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES, WATER AND SOME SEDIMENT SAMPLES ARE BEING TAKEN ALONG THE SHIP'S ROUTE BEFOREHAND. SIMILAR SAMPLES WILL ALSO BE TAKEN DURING AND AFTER THE TRANSIT TO COMPLETE THE PICTURE.

H. THE SHIP WILL BE GIVEN CLEAR PASSAGE THROUGH THE CANAL AND BE ESCORTED BY A COMPANY TUG AT ALL TIMES.

I. THE SHIP IS OF SUCH A SIZE THAT IT WILL BE ABLE TO FIT COMFORTABLY INTO THE CANAL'S LOCKS.

J. THE CANAL COMPANY WILL PRE-POSITION CLEAN-UP EQUIPMENT TO RECOVER ANY HERBICIDE QUICKLY SHOULD A SPILL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OCCUR DESPITE THE PRECAUTIONS. (HERBICIDE ORANGE IS INSOLUBLE IN WATER AND SINKS TO THE BOTTOM WHERE IT CAN BE VACUUMED IN SHALLOW WATER.)

K. UNITED STATES COAST GUARD SPECIALISTS WILL BE PRESENT TO ADVISE ANY CLEAN-UP EFFORT WHICH MAY BE NECESSARY.

L. COMPANY AND COAST GUARD DIVERS WILL BE ON MOBILE DIVING BARGE DURING THE TRANSIT.

M. THE PANAMA CANAL COMPANY HAS REVIEWED ALL TRANSIT PLANS, APPROVED THE TRANSIT, AND FORESEES NO OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS. VANCE

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